

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Non-final office action of December 9, 2005 has been carefully reviewed and these remarks are responsive thereto. Claims 1-36 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Applicants reserve the right to file a continuation application to the subject matter of claims 1-36. Claims 37 and 38 remain in this application.

Applicants note with appreciation the indication of the allowability of claims 37 and 38.

Claims 9, 26, and 27 were objected to for informalities. Claims 9, 26, and 27 have been canceled. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, and 8-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Shaffer (U.S. Patent No. 6,683,889). Claims 25-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Pate (U.S. Patent No. 6,757,292). Claims 3-7 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shaffer in view of Hatano (U.S. Pat. No. 5,737,314). Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shaffer in view of Amster (U.S. Pat. No. 6,961,315). Claims 14 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shaffer and Amster in view of Yarroll (U.S. Pub. No. 2003/0115320). Claims 16 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shaffer in view of Bharucha (U.S. Pub. App. No. 2003/0064187). Claims 18-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shaffer and Bharucha in view of Kuroshita (U.S. Pat. No. 5,550,807), Jones (U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0161542), and Hallenstal (U.S. Pub. No. 2001/0036158). Claim 28 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pate in view of Bharucha. Claims 29-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pate in view of Kim (U.S. Pub. No. 2002/0172148). Claim 33 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pate and Kim in view of Ren (U.S. Pat. No. 6,456,590). Claim 34 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pate and Kim in view of Bharucha. Claim 35 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Pate in view of Bharucha. Claim 36 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Larson (U.S. Pat. No. 4,569,042) in view of Pate and Sato (U.S. Pat. No. 5,646,568).

Merely to expedite prosecution, claims 1-36 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Therefore, the rejection should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that no fee is required for this submission. If any fees are required or if an overpayment is made, the Commissioner is authorized to debit or credit our Deposit Account No. 19-0733, accordingly.

All rejections having been addressed, applicants respectfully submit that the instant application is in condition for allowance, and respectfully solicit prompt notification of the same.

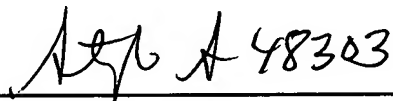
Respectfully submitted,

BANNER & WITCOFF, LTD.

Dated: February 23, 2006

By:

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